

# What is Libertarianism?

“The essence of libertarianism is the “private property ethic”. This ethic states that all *scarce* goods are subject to private ownership, given they are acquired via original appropriation or voluntary exchange. Ownership entails the *exclusive right* to use, occupy, or employ a good free of aggressive interference. Moreover, one is and can only be the exclusive owner of his/her own physical body; this is more commonly referred to as the principle of “self-ownership”. Finally, aggression is defined as the uninvited initiation of physical interference with the persons or property of others, or threats thereof. The *Non-aggression principle* (NAP) may be extrapolated from the private property ethic. This simply condemns all aggression as being unjustified and criminal. Keep in mind, the purpose of the libertarian ethic is to reveal under what conditions the use of physical force is justified and under what other conditions it is unjustified and criminal. *It is this purpose which confines the scope of libertarianism to the aforementioned principles.*”

From “A Critique of Left-Libertarianism” by Chase Rachels

